

The shades are drawn  
in the red brick  
above these storefronts. You

may see the hand  
that lets them up. The hand with arm  
at the window, or

later, a woman in white  
with hat, pop  
out of the doorway and stand,

smelling the chalk cement, pigeon  
droppings, damp canvas  
awnings, yawn

and turning to her right, click  
down the street like a tongue  
against the roof of a mouth.

#### Line Drawing

You fold your head  
and arm across the table

like a wing drawn in  
or like a grounded kite You

are a Scandanavian Indian listening  
to horses distant in the wood

Your cheekbones are so high  
they form a butterfly

in the air under your eyes And  
when you smile he lights up

and your eyes close like the happy  
Chinese ancestor I never had

#### Girl Sitting Alone At A Party

You have forced your body  
into a chair as if insulted.  
And now you cock  
your head like a bird challenging  
a worm already dead. Lips  
as officious as a government

seal. You hold  
your knee as if it were the thing  
blushing, and it will be  
when you move your hand. You  
are so sad: under your chair  
the chrome legs make a cross  
in the air like fingers  
across your heart.

-- Robert L McRoberts

Bristol RI

### The Mixologist

Jamal asked about my father

he was born on a farm  
and lived with his  
eight brothers and sisters  
until he was thirteen  
and ran away with a small circus  
where he followed elephants  
around the center ring  
then became a clown and juggler

years later he almost married  
a woman who swung from a trapeze  
by her teeth but he could see how  
their life together would be

Jamal asked what happened --  
how did he end up in the city  
painting houses  
and grinning shyly  
(hiding his bad teeth)  
when at sixty-two a newspaper  
printed his picture mixing paint

I told her I didn't know

### Wash Out

it rained so hard last night  
I almost became a Jehovah's witness

water poured in between the ribs  
of the patched roof